

**THOMAS M. BAKK**

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## Senate

State of Minnesota

January 17, 2012

President Eric Kaler  
University of Minnesota  
202 Morrill Hall  
100 Church Street S.E.  
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Dear President Kaler:

As you are aware, the United Auto Workers are working to organize a labor union for the 4,500 Graduate Assistant employees at the University of Minnesota. As you also know, Graduate Assistants play a critical role in contributing to the university's research and teaching missions. Graduate Assistants perform research in a wide range of fields, ranging from industrial engineering, to finding treatments and cures for diseases such as diabetes and cancer, to helping to shape global economic policy. Graduate Assistants also provide instruction for the undergraduate student body; they teach courses, grade papers, lead discussion sections and provide advising and mentoring.

Graduate Assistant employees are valuable members of the University community. Like many other employees, their rights to collective bargaining are guaranteed under Minnesota Statute 179A.11, Subdivision 1, Section 10. Collective bargaining clearly and demonstrably gives employees the power to sit down with their employer and negotiate in good faith for improvements to their wages, hours, benefits and working conditions.

It has come to my attention that you have posted a document on your website about the Graduate Assistant employee union drive, entitled, "Frequently Asked Questions About Unionization." In this document you claim that a Union cannot improve health care, rate of pay, job security and workload. As you know, by law these are mandatory topics of bargaining. Your characterization of the Union as being unable to "improve" these terms and conditions of employment misrepresents the important gains in wages, benefits, rights and protections that all employees may achieve through collective bargaining.

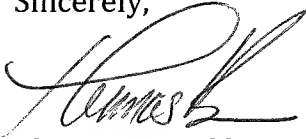


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I urge you to respect the rights of your employees to make their own decisions about forming a Union, and be cautious about circulating misleading and inaccurate information related to the potential benefits of collective bargaining.

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thomas M. Bakk', with a stylized, flowing script.

Thomas M. Bakk  
DFL Caucus Leader  
State Senator, District 6